

Beginners guide to
Communications

The
Robertson
Trust





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Media Relations

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Introduction

Media relations refers to any interaction with journalists. It is an essential way to raise the profile of your work and provide in-depth information to the public.

Media relations can be targeted to specific journalists, media outlets, regions, or sectors, depending on your goals and available resources.

Effective media relations can help:

- Raise public awareness of your projects and organisation
- Increase understanding of your work
- Create a positive profile through news coverage

Editorial content refers to material written or produced by journalists, while advertisements and advertorials are paid for. This guide focuses on editorial coverage.

However, editorial coverage is never guaranteed. Sending a media release does not ensure publication. Coverage depends on how newsworthy the story is, what else is happening at the time, and the space available. If a story is not picked up, don't be discouraged—continue developing new angles and opportunities, and coverage is more likely over time.



Introduction

Media relations can be challenging. Newsrooms receive a high volume of media releases every day and journalists need to be selective about the stories they cover.

Building strong relationships with journalists and being thoughtful about where you seek coverage can significantly improve your chances of getting your message heard. There are four main tiers of media in Scotland:

- **Local media:** Free local newspapers, weekly titles, and community radio stations. For example, the Ayrshire Post, West Lothian Courier, Fife Free Press, Kingdom FM, and West FM.
- **Regional media:** Larger outlets covering wider areas, such as The Aberdeen Evening Express, STV Glasgow, and Heart FM.
- **National media:** Nationwide outlets covering stories from across Scotland, the UK, and beyond—for example, The Scotsman, Scottish Daily Mail, BBC Radio Scotland, and STV.
- **Specialist trade media:** Sector-specific outlets, such as Holyrood Magazine or Third Force News.

We recommend building relationships with journalists by sharing your current activities and future plans, helping them understand your work and spot potential stories. Be realistic about the stories you are offering—ask yourself:

- Does this journalist or media outlet usually cover stories like this?
- Why would this story be relevant to their audience?
- How could I make this story more engaging or newsworthy?



Drafting/issuing a media release

A media release is an effective way to share information about your work with journalists. It can be emailed to relevant contacts to support your story.

Key information to include

Who? *Key organisations and people involved. Who does the news affect or benefit?*

What? *What is new?*

Why? *Why is this important?*

Where? *Is there a relevant location or geographic angle?*

When? *What is the timing? Does this add significance?*

How? *How did this come about?*

Timing

Most media outlets work to deadlines. Be aware of these and plan your release accordingly.

Headline

The headline is the first thing a journalist will read. It should be clear, engaging, and encourage them to read on.

Structure and length

- Keep sentences short and clear
- Aim for one page (around 400–500 words)
- Include three to four short paragraphs and at least one quote
- The opening line should summarise the story in 15–20 words
- End with contact details and a notes to editors section, including background information about your organisation. Avoid placing background information in the opening paragraph.

Drafting/issuing a media release

Using evidence

Support your story with relevant statistics where possible. This strengthens your message and makes it more compelling.

Including quotes

Include one or two quotes from relevant spokespeople. Start with their name and title, for example: *Joe Bloggs, Director of Your Organisation said: "[Insert quote]"*. Quotes should reinforce your key messages and be no longer than 70 words.

Style and formatting

Use a clear, consistent format:

- Font: Arial
- Headline: size 14, bold
- Body text: size 11, 1.5 spacing
- Contact details: size 11, bold

Include your organisation's logo at the top so journalists can immediately identify the source.

Issuing the release

- Paste the release into the body of an email (not as an attachment)
- Send emails individually or use Bcc
- Follow up with a phone call where appropriate.

Think beyond news pages

Consider other sections that may be relevant:

- Business: economic or industry angles
- Lifestyle: case studies or human interest stories
- Sport: if applicable
- Letters to the editor: respond to relevant coverage

Always remember...

Journalists *need* stories. Your work, insights, and impact can provide valuable content - so don't hesitate to share them!



Sample Media Release



Change takes trust

NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE USE: [day, date year]

The Robertson Trust launches [project info]

[News angle – including statistics, key organisations and news hook] was announced today by The Robertson Trust.

This follows [additional information – including more research, relevant information and details of news angle]

[More detail but less important information]

[Name], [title] at [organisation], said: “[insert quote]”

Further information is available by visiting [website address].

ENDS

For more information, please contact [name, email address and phone number].

Notes to Editors [Any additional information]

Drafting/issuing a media invites

Inviting media to an event or photo/video opportunity is a great way to increase awareness before, during, and after the event. To alert journalists and encourage attendance, you should send a media invite.

What to include

A media invite should include:

- Key event details, including venue, date, and location
- What will happen at the event (e.g. announcements, photo or video opportunities)
- Information on speakers, partner organisations, and notable attendees
- Background information on your organisation

A template is provided below to support this.

Sending the media invite

For formal events, send invites 4–5 weeks in advance to give journalists time to plan. Follow up a few days before the event to confirm attendance.

For photo/video opportunities, send invites to picture desks and broadcast journalists 2–3 days in advance, and follow up again on the day.

Consider your audience

Be mindful of journalists' locations when inviting them. Consider:

- Where is the journalist based?
- Does the outlet usually cover events in this area?
- Would attendance add value, or would the story work better as a press release instead?



Sample Media Invite



Change takes trust

MEDIA CALLING NOTICE

What: The Robertson Trust hosts [xx] event as part of xx

When: [start time – end time], [date]

Where: [venue name], [full address, including postcode]

Contact: [your name], [phone number], [email address]

The Robertson Trust will host an exciting event as part of [info]. Media are invited to [venue name] to photograph and film [details of event].

[Background info on project including information about the event and key speakers/key individuals/organisations that will attend.]

For further information please visit: [website address]

To confirm attendance, please contact [contact name, email and telephone number].

ENDS

Setting up case studies

Telling the stories of real people can be a powerful way to bring complex issues to life. Where possible, you may wish to involve case studies who have direct experience of the issues you are highlighting.

However, it is essential that anyone taking part fully understands what is involved and feels comfortable and confident in sharing their story. Participation should always be voluntary, and individuals should never feel pressured to take part.

Getting a good story

Finding a case study can be challenging, particularly when dealing with sensitive topics. It is important that individuals are prepared for their story to appear in print, online, on TV, or on the radio, and understand the potential reach. A strong case study should include:

- A clear connection to the project
- An example of the project in action
- Positive outcomes or impact
- A human or emotional element that audiences can relate to

Presenting the story

Where possible, write up the case study as a one-page document. Include key background details and explain how it links to your wider story. Send this to journalists alongside your pitch, including a brief overview and suggested angle.

Preparing a case study for interview

Support your case study to feel confident and in control. You can advise them to:

- Share only what you feel comfortable with
- Don't say anything you wouldn't want made public
- Avoid naming others without permission
- It's okay to say "I'd rather not answer that"
- You can provide further information after the interview
- You can withdraw at any time

Using photography and video

Strong visuals increase your chances of securing coverage in local media and online. However, not all outlets can send a photographer, so it's often worth capturing your own content.

If your budget allows, consider hiring a freelance photographer. If not, use the following guidelines:

What to capture

- **Who:** Photograph participants, staff, and volunteers. Choose subjects that make engaging images (e.g. people actively enjoying the event).
- **What:** Capture colourful, engaging images that tell the story - this could include action shots, outdoor scenes, or use of props.
- **Where:** Use bright, naturally lit locations wherever possible.
- **When:** Take photos throughout the event, but also set aside time for staged shots if needed.
- **Why:** Create high-quality images for media use, social media, and your website.

Permissions

Always ask permission before taking photos. Consent forms can be found at the back of this document. For school settings, check with teachers in advance and confirm which children have permission.

The Robertson Trust

On occasion, The Robertson Trust may be able to attend and capture video/photography at events you're hosting. Please contact **trtcomms@therobertsontrust.org.uk**

Using photography and video

Booking and briefing a photographer

If you are hiring a professional, provide a clear brief in advance so they understand your goals and can capture the right content. Always share this in writing.

What to include in your brief

- **Background:** The purpose of the shoot and how the images will be used
- **Shots required:** What the images should show and who should be included
- **Logistics:** Timings, deadlines, formats, and responsibilities on the day



Photography/Videography Sample Brief



Change takes trust

Photographer: [Photographer / videographer name and contact details]

What: [Event name]

Date & Time: [Time], [Date]

Location: [Insert location details, address and postcode]

Contact: [Your name], [phone number and email address]

Background:

To promote [info].

What:

We are looking for editorial images / videos that will be sent to [insert media outlet or type of communication channel]. We are looking to have a selection of photos taken of the [subject(s)].

Shots required:

The images / video are to portray [info]. Below are some suggested shots but please use your creative knowledge on the day to get the best and most impactful shots for media:
[insert some picture / video ideas]

Required: Please send a selection of the best landscape and portrait shots in [insert info on format] to [your name], [phone [email address]] by [insert deadline].

Using Social Media

Social media can be a powerful way to raise awareness of your organisation, share updates, and engage with your community. However, it's important to approach it thoughtfully to ensure it works for you.

We won't go into too much detail in this guide, as there is an abundance of online resources available. For comprehensive guidance, we recommend OSCR's guide: [Ready, Set, Go: Social Media Guidance](#).

Key considerations

- **Resources:** Only maintain accounts you can update consistently. Inactive profiles can harm your credibility.
- **Tone of voice:** Establish a clear, consistent style across your posts. Aim for warmth and authenticity, and make sure your organisation's personality comes through. Avoid sounding overly robotic or generic.
- **Audience:** Focus on platforms your audience actually uses. Quality engagement is better than spreading yourself too thin.
- **Content and risks:** Social media is public and permanent. Avoid offensive or insensitive posts, and double-check facts before sharing. Be careful with images, quotes, or sensitive information.
- **Using AI:** AI can help generate ideas or drafts, but don't rely on it for everything. Posts should reflect your organisation's authentic voice, and you should always review AI-generated content before posting.

Tips for success

- Plan your content in advance to ensure a mix of updates, news, and engaging posts.
- Encourage two-way conversations by asking questions and responding to feedback.
- Monitor engagement and adjust your approach based on what resonates with your audience.

Referring to The Robertson Trust

About The Robertson Trust

The Robertson Trust is an independent grant-making trust in Scotland. Established in 1961, the Trust's mission is to prevent and reduce poverty and trauma in Scotland by funding, supporting, and influencing solutions to drive social change.

Want to use our logo?

Please feel free to use our logo on any publications you produce about work we are directly supporting. We are also happy for our logo to be included when referring more generally to supporters of your organisation, for example, within Annual Reports, presentations or brochures. You can [download our full logo pack here](#). This has a both JPEG and PNG files, as well as guidance on the best files to use.

Promoting on Social Media

We would be very happy to help you with promotion of your funding on social media. Tagging The Robertson Trust on LinkedIn or BlueSky will alert us to your acknowledgement and, where possible, we will repost.

Press Releases

We're usually happy to provide a quote from one of our team to support any press releases you produce around your funding. Please send a copy of your draft press release to TRTComms@therobertsontrust.org.uk, ensuring you have left enough time for the quote to be provided ahead of the targeted media's deadlines. We will do our best to provide a quote to you within two working days.

Photography consent form

To be completed by individual(s) (parents/guardians if subject is less than 18 years of age) before photographs are taken.

I hereby grant (insert name of organisation) the right to use the photograph(s) resulting from the photo shoot, and any reproductions or adaptations of the photograph(s) for all general purposes in relation to (insert name of organisation)'s work including, without limitation, the right to use them in any publicity materials, websites, newspapers and magazine articles whenever (insert name of organisation) to do so.

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Name and address of parent/guardian if person to be photographed is less than 18 years of age

Name (please print)..... _____

Address _____

Signature _____ **Date** _____